



The Marks of Discipleship: Spiritual Growth

Day One: *What? Transformed Hearts*

Is your heart willing to be transformed? If we are to be disciples of Christ, we need to begin by knowing what God wants of us. First, God wants our heart. Read Jeremiah 31:33-34, Ezekiel 36:26-27, and Romans 12:2. God wants to give us a new heart, and in so doing we will be transformed. While belief is about God's love for us, discipleship is about our love for God. It's being in an active relationship with God. It's a matter of the heart. Do you love Jesus? In your prayers, imagine standing face to face with Jesus and his saying, "I love you."

Day Two: *What? Called to Grow*

Which area of your life has experienced the most growth in the past year? Which is most in need of growth? Many of us know the importance of growing intellectually, physically, and emotionally, but how many of us are intentional about growing spiritually? Read Ephesians 4:11-13. God has given each of us gifts to be used. Using our gifts also means growing our gifts. Gifts left in a box on a shelf are no good to anyone. Gifts unwrapped and let loose in the world benefit many people. What gifts need to be unwrapped in your life? In your prayers, ask God which gifts you need to grow and how you might put them to use.

Day Three: *What? Knowledge of Truth*

Do you know what's true in your life? In the world? God wants us to have an inner compass to guide our life. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life." Not only did he claim to be the truth, but he modeled the truth. Read John 8:31-36. The truth not only guides our life but sets us free. Read some other verses that teach us about truth: John 7:14-18, 2 Timothy 2:15-18, 24-26, and 2 John 1 -6. Does the truth guide your decisions? What do you need to highlight the role of truth in your life? In your prayers, listen for the truth that comes only from God. As part of your prayer, read some of the verses from John.

Day Four: *How? Honest with Ourselves*

What happens when leaders are willing to be honest? What happens when they are dishonest? Part of growing as a disciple of Christ is the ability to be honest with ourselves and God. For leaders, it also includes being honest with those who follow. Read 1 Samuel 12:1-5 – Samuel's farewell speech. Here we see a leader of faith, living his example of honesty in a time when honesty among leaders, including those in the church, was rare. Although the price of being honest with ourselves may be high, being dishonest has an even higher price. About what do you need to get honest in your spiritual life? Bring that issue to God in your prayers.

Day Five: *How? Open Minded to God's Work*

When was the last time you witnessed God at work? Do you believe God is actively working in this world every day? Read some stories that highlight God at work: Genesis 32:22-30, Job 40:1 -7, Ezekiel 1:25-2:2, and Luke 8:22-25. God is active by talking with people, calling people to missions and in stirring and calming creation. Are you willing to look for God at work in your life? What do you need to change to make this possible? Sometimes God works in miraculous ways, but God also works through other people, nature and even our own dreams and visions. Today, ask God to let your blinders down, so you might see some of the wonders around you.

Day Six: *How? Willing Attitude*

Why do you think Jesus called sinful men rather than rabbis to be his disciples? Read Matthew 9:9-13. Jesus does not say we have to be perfect to be disciples, but to have a willing spirit. Many leaders in the church were far from perfect; in fact, King David came to God and asked for a new spirit. Read Psalm 51:7-12. How's your spiritual attitude? Is your attitude getting in the way of your spiritual growth? Do you need to renew your spirit? Pray these verses in Psalms as a way to renew your spirit.

Day Seven: *Action-Repeat, Repeat, Repeat*

Now it's time to act! We've answered the question what is spiritual growth and how to be involved in spiritual growth, now it's time to put it into action and make it a way of life. What do you think would help you with your spiritual growth plan? What would it take to transform your heart? Read 1 Peter 2:4-6, 9-12, focusing especially on verse 12. Others notice our actions and will see God through us if we live our faith. Growing spiritually takes commitment over a period of time. It means doing things over and over again, until they finally become part of who we are. Make a spiritual growth plan for yourself. In your prayers, ask God to give you perseverance, beginning with today.